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ABSTRACT

This study compares the effects of a 2-week humanistic training program, a 4-week participation observation experience, and a 7-week special methods program on the perceptions of prospective elementary school teachers from West Virginia University and elementary teachers from Monogalis County, West Virginia. Sixty-six subjects took part. The research tested the hypotheses that these programs would not affect the teachers' perceptions concerning a) self concept, b) personal beliefs, c) degree of open-mindedness, d) classroom practices, e) student relationship, and f) reaction to classroom situations. All subjects were pretested with the Personal Orientation Inventory (POI), Relationship Inventory (RI), Personal Beliefs Inventory (PBI), Teacher Practices Inventory (TIP), Dogmatism Scale (DS), Teacher Situation Reaction Test (TSRT), and the Tennessee Self Concept (TSC). The experimental group of teachers completed the DS, PBI, TSRT, and the TPI. The following implications emerged: a) efforts should be made to determine the individual needs of prospective teachers, and assignments should be made to individual programs; b) sequential humanistic programs should be implemented early in the college program with emphasis on course presentation; and c) future programs should be designed with frequent public school experiences early in the college program. (Eight references are included.) (BRB)

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An Investigation into the Effects of a Humanistic Training Method on the Perceptions of Elementary Teachers--In-Training

The major objective of this study was to compare the effects of a two-week humanistic training program, four-week participation observation experience and a seven week special methods program on the perceptions of prospective elementary teachers. The study tested the hypotheses that the three programs mentioned above would not effect the prospective elementary teachers' perceptions regarding: (1) self concept; (2) personal beliefs; (3) degree of open-mindedness; (4) classroom practices; (5) relationship to his students; and (6) reaction to classroom situations.

To date there has been little research on what effects a humanistic general methods program has upon the perceptions and self concept of prospective teachers prior to their student teaching experience. Therefore, it was the purpose of this study to produce data regarding the development of prospective teachers' perceptions prior to student teaching.

Many studies (3,8) indicate that the perceptual development of teachers is an important and vital area in education. Furthermore, they substantiate the theory of perceptual psychology and its relationship to teaching and learning.

A number of studies (7,1) have been concerned with the factors necessary for children to learn. One such factor-teacher perception-and its effect on pupil attitude and achievement has been well documented. A basic concern of this author's study was to investigate

the perceptions, attitudes, and self concepts. It was felt that children are likely to learn most from teachers who show high levels of understanding and respect for their students.

Most studies (5,6) in teacher education recommend that prospective teachers should be given contacts with children in an educational setting prior to their student teaching experience. The actual involvement with youngsters is felt to be a more relevant way of learning about social interaction appropriate to teaching. In addition, it allows the prospective teacher to enter into personal relationships with elementary students, colleagues, administrators, parents of his students and other persons in the community.

A number of studies (2,4) have been concerned with the effect of a "modeling demonstration" on teacher behavior. Consequently, it was the intent of this study to develop and implement a perceptual model. A program which would facilitate the development of prospective teachers by modifying their perceptions, attitudes, beliefs, values of self and teaching. The major goal of such a teacher preparation program would emphasize the value of experimentalism, the mutual benefit of accepting people for their worth, the development of openmindedness in the prosepctive teacher, the creation of teacher-pupil relationships which foster a positive social-emotional climate, and the development of a positive self concept.

Specifically, this methods program would provide a variety of experiences designed to develop those perceptions of prospective teachers which are conducive to positive interpersonal relationships with elementary

students. The program included modules which allowed the prospective teachers to acquire knowledge about themselves and the humanistic approach to teaching, there was experiences concerned with communication skills, inquiry teaching, and group process. It is expected that the prospective teacher would assimilate this humanistic aspect with other teaching skills, during his teaching experience.

This study utilized components of these: public school experience, a human relationship program and a special methods program.

This study was designed to include public school experience, and a human relations program in conjunction with a seven week special methods program.

Literature reviewed indicates that there had been little research on what effects a humanistic general methods program had upon the perceptions and self concept of prospective teachers prior to their student teaching experience. Therefore this study, designed to produce data regarding the development of prospective teachers' perceptions prior to their student teaching experience, is presented.

Instruments, Population and Sample

Twenty teachers from Monogalia County, West Virginia and forty-six prospective elementary teachers from West Virginia were used in this study.

The prospective elementary teacher population was composed of all the elementary education majors participating in the pre-student teaching phase of their professional preparation at West Virginia University. Therefore, since all prospective elementary teachers constituted the universal population, no sampling procedures were warranted.

The cooperating teacher population was composed of all the cooperating Monogalia County elementary school teachers who participated in the West Virginia University Participation-Observation Program.

Forty-six prospective elementary teachers from West Virginia University and twenty elementary school teachers from Monongalia County, West Virginia, were matched according to the magnitude of their scores on the Personal Orientation Inventory. The subjects were then randomly assigned to one of two groups.

As a further control both groups of prospective elementary school teachers responded to a pre-test on the Relationship Inventory, Personal Beliefs Inventory, Teacher Practices Inventory, Dogmatism Scale, Teacher Situation Reaction Test, and the Tennessee Self Concept at the start of the investigation.

Cooperating teachers were pre-tested on four test instruments to insure that they were not statistically different at the start of the four-week participation-observation experiences. These four tests were the Dogmatism Scale, Personal Beliefs Inventory, Teacher Situation Reaction Test and Teacher Practices Inventory.

Procedures

All participating supervising teachers and prospective elementary teachers completed the Personal Orientation Inventory prior to the start of the study. The test scores of this inventory were used to rank order the supervising teachers and prospective elementary teachers from high to low according to the magnitude of their scores. The supervising teachers and prospective elementary teachers were matched according to their scores in chronological order from high to low.

All prospective elementary teachers in both groups was administered pre-tests on all six test instruments and the results of these tests were analyzed to insure that no statistically significant difference existed between the two groups prior to the two-week training period.

The prospective elementary school teachers were randomly assigned to one of two sections. One of these sections was randomly selected as the control group and the other designated as the experimental group. The subjects within each group were randomly selected to participate in a multiple-subject group or single-subject placement for the completion of their participation-observation experience. The elementary school teachers were randomly selected to supervise a control or experimental group of prospective teachers. These teachers within each group were randomly assigned to supervise a multiple-subject group or a single prospective teacher.

Group I (experimental) participated in a two-week, thirty-hour humanistic training program. The control Group 2 did not participate in a humanistic training program during this two-week period. At the end of the treatment period, Groups 1 and 2 were tested to determine if there was any statistically significant difference in perceptions, attitudes, and self concept.

Group 1 and Group 2 then began a four-week, eighty-hour participation-observation program in the public schools. The battery of tests was administered to Groups 1 and 2 at the end of the four-week participation-observation experience to determine if there was any statistically significant difference in perceptions, attitudes, and self concept.

Both groups were then given a seven-week special methods program at West Virginia University. At the conclusion of this period, both Groups 1 and 2 were given a post-test to determine if there was any statistically significant difference in perceptions, attitudes, and self concept.

All testing was administered by one trained instructor in charge of the two groups used in this study.

The analysis of variance test statistic was used to compare group mean z scores between Groups 1 and 2 on the two-week, six-week, and post-test scores. The anlysis of variance test statistic was also used to compare differences within each group, examining the pre- to two-week, two-week to six-week, six-week to post, and pre-post results on all test instruments.

Conclusions

Statistical significance on test score means regarding open-mindedness was evidenced within both groups of prospective elementary teachers at the time of the two-week test. This statistical difference was due to a positive increase in the scores of both groups at the time of the two-week test. Group 1 increased their mean score by 72 points and Group 2 increased their mean score by 52 points. This evidence demonstrates that the prospective elementary teachers' perceptions of open-mindedness improved during the two-week period prior to the public school experience. This improvement was evidenced in the control group as well as in the experimental group. Consequently, it may be concluded that the anticipation of a new experience, such as the first public school encounter as a teacher, may be a viable determiner of a person's degree of open-mindedness.

There was also a statistically significant difference evidenced within Group 1 at the time of the two-week test on perceptions regarding teacher-pupil relationships. This statistical significant difference may indicate that the humanistic methods program was valuable in developing perceptions regarding teacher-pupil relationships. However, this gain in test score means was not maintained during the duration of this study and group 1's post-test score mean was 10 points lower than their pre-test score mean. Although the humanistic methods program was capable of increasing the prospective elementary teachers' perceptions of teacher-pupil relationships, it may be concluded that the treatment as presented in this study was not effective in maintaining these gains. This was evident at the conclusion of the public school experience and the seven-week special methods program. At these two times the test score mean of Group 1 decreased on the Relationship Inventory.

At the end of the seven-week special methods program, statistical significance was found within both groups regarding perceptions of teacher practices and reactions to classroom situations.

Group 1 increased their test score means regarding perceptions of teacher practices at the conclusion of the two-week humanistic methods program. During the same period of time Group 2 evidenced a decrease of 6 points. This difference between Group 1 and Group 2 did not reach statistical significance at the .05 level. A logical conclusion that might be drawn from this data is that perceptions of teacher pratices can be increased in a relatively short period of time. After the participation-observation experience Group 1's test mean score decreased while Group 2's mean score increased .4. Both group's test mean scores

reached statistical significance at the time of the post-test. This seems to indicate that a seven-week special methods program which is preceded by a participation-observation experience can develop positive perceptions regarding teacher practices.

Group 1's within test score means regarding reactions to classroom situations reached statistical significance at the .05 level after the seven-week special methods program which followed the two-week humanistic methods program and the four-week participation-observation experience. Group 2's test score mean reached statistical significance at the same time without having participated in the two-week humanistic methods program, but having completed the participation-observation experience and the seven-week special methods program. Furthermore, both groups reached statistical significance at the time of the post-test, although only one group received the two-week humanistic methods program. This seems to indicate that a seven-week special methods program which follows a four-week participation-observation experience aan develop positive perceptions concerning reactions to classroom situations. In addition, it may imply that classroom theory can have a significant effect upon the perceptions of the prospective elementary teacher after the prospective elementary teacher has completed a public school experience. This evidence may cause one to conclude that the two-week humanistic methods program was not effective in developing more positive perceptions regarding reactions to classroom situations.

Furthermore, the evidence of this study indicates that measuring overall perceptions may not be as important as measuring and diagnosis the individual needs of the prospective elementary teacher. In addition,

it seems to indicate that the prospective teacher should be given a systematic human relations program beginning early in their college career.

Evidence was also produced which indicated that perceptions of prospective elementary teachers are subject to change in the pre-student teaching semester at West Virginia University.

Implications

The results of this study seem to have three clear implications: (1) efforts should be made to determine the individual needs of prospective elementary teachers and assign those prospective elementary teachers to a program best suited for the development of these needs, (2) sequential humanistic programs should be implemented early in the prospective teacher's college career with careful attention being placed on the sequence of course presentation, and (3) since the prospective elementary teacher's experience in the public school did have an effect on some variables investigated in this study, it seems to be a logical extension to examine a program design which would allow for frequent public school experiences earlier in the prospective teacher's college career.

Therefore, programs developed for teacher education institutions may need to begin early in the prospective teacher's training. These programs would be highly individualized and would permit the elementary education major a variety of experiences both at the university and in the public schools. In order to develop an individualized program, the first procedure would be to evaluate the perceptual characteristics of the prospective teachers. Early diagnosis of the prospective teacher's individual perceptual needs seems to be supported by the evidence found in this study. Although the difference between the two randomly selected

groups used in this study was not significant, it is interesting to note that one group scored higher in all perceptual areas tested in this study except self concept. If these differences exist in two randomly selected groups of prospective elementary school teachers, it is logical to assume that meeting individual needs may be much more important than large group instruction based entirely on compiling credit hours for matriculation. In other words, if the needs of the prospective teacher can be determined at an early time in his training sequence, that individual could be determined at an early time in his training sequence, that individual could be directed into certain learning situations designed to promote his perceptual development.

Furthermore, the data from this study seems to indicate that perceptual evaluations may be affected by the anticipation of a new school experience. The fact that both groups of prospective teachers in this study increased their degree of open-mindedness before their first school experience allows for some speculations. It may be that a person's degree of open-mindedness should be measured after the new experience and not immediately before the new experience. This would indicate that the most reliable time to measure a prospective teacher's degree of openmindedness may be at the end of the sophomore year, after the student has established himself in the college setting. This would be prior to his entrance into the practical phase of teacher training and after the completion of two years of content preparation in the liberal arts. Consequently, any further evaluation of open-mindedness might be attributed to his anticipation of future educational experiences.

Furthermore, this viewpoint seems to suggest that the sequence of the prospective teachers' pre-student teaching experiences may affect their degree of open-mindedness.

Teacher training institutions may need to be concerned with a sequential human relations program. Results of this study seem to suggest that classroom theory does not change perceptions regarding teacher-pupil relationships on a permanent basis. Therefore, an earlier exposure to elementary school students may help the prospective teacher to conceptualize a perceptual framework with which he can build positive perceptions regarding those students.

Furthermore, if the humanistic methods program is implemented earlier and continued on a sequential schedule it might be more effective in developing positive perceptions on prospective elementary teachers.

This study developed evidence that a non-participation was just as effective as participation in a two-week humanistic methods program prior to the participation-observation experience. Therefore, institutions which are preparing prospective elementary school teachers should review the sequence in which the methods programs are presented to the pre-student teacher. Perhaps seminars following the pre-student teaching experience and more frequent visits to the public schools would be more effective in developing positive and permanent perceptual changes within the prospective elementary teacher.

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